

**NORTH DAKOTA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**  
**QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES**

**July 21, 2021**  
10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., CST  
**Virtual and**  
**HIT Inc.**

**Members Present:** Cynthia Goulet, Trevor Vannett, Damian Schlinger, Renee Speidel-Wetzsteon, Terry Peterson, Russ Cusack, Jason Sutheimer, Matthew McCleary, Cathy Quintane, Trampes Brown, Landis Larson, Jacey Enget, Tina Bay, Bruce Murry, Brandy Johnson, Shannon Cook., Beth Larson-Steckler

**Members Absent:** Marshall Longie, Jodi Webb

**Call to Order:** Renee Speidel-Wetzsteon called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

**Action:** A motion to accept the agenda was made by Trevor Vannett and seconded by Jacey Enget. Motion carried.

**Action:** A motion to approve the April 2020 minutes was made by Cynthia Goulet and seconded by Shannon Cook. Motion carried.

**DVR Regional V Update – Curt Markel**

8 counselors, VRS, CAS, BSS, 2 support staff, RA. All staff back in office

Goals (Over 66% of the way thru our year)

- Applicants – 2020 254 goal being 360 - 71% of goal
  - 2021 244/360 – 68%
- VR Plans/Service – 2020 196 goal being 265 - 74% of goal
  - 182/265 69%
- Employed – 2020 102 goal being 128 – 80% of goal
  - 88/128 69%
- 2020 average caseload = 55
- 2021 average caseload = 51.5

3.2 % Unemployment in Fargo

4.1% Unemployment in Wahpeton

Counselors work with transition students in 23 high schools. Three proposals for Pre-ETS.

NDSCS Career Innovation Center to open fall 2022. Goal to increase Employer/Business contacts to bring in referrals. Russ Cusack recommended the region work the NET-specifically Cathy West Evans on this.

**DVR Region VIII Update – Becki Hoff**

Region VIII services 8 counties. Staff include two counselors, one VRS, one support staff. Bismarck Business specialist serves Region VIII. Fully staffed. Becki will be retiring at the end of July. Selection of a new RA is forthcoming-Council thanked Becki for her years of service. All staff are in office. COVID- front door is open to public-no longer need to ask COVID question/take temperatures. Region serves the three schools in Dickinson and 12 in the outlying area. Currently have a total of 118, 110 cases, with transition students comprising 13% of cases. 114 students receiving Pre-ETS through the contract with Dickinson High.

**SILC Update:**

Met May 6, 2021. All Center Directors reported an increase in demand for at home service. Russ Korzeniewski, DHS presented on Access and Functional Needs and Shelter Access. SILC updated bylaws VR is working with the SILC on the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). Need to recruit a new member. An announcement re: this is on Freedom Resource Centers (Fargo CIL) Facebook Page. Work around developing, distributing, and analyzing results of a survey of stakeholders, to meet a SPIL objective. Next meeting of the SILC is in Fargo, August 5 & 6 both in person and via Microsoft Teams. Further questions related to the August meeting agenda may be directed to Aimee Volk, alvolk@nd.gov.

**VR Director Update:**

Total of 100 slots for the tax incentive. One slot utilized thus far. Recent activities: work to increase the number of VR applications, ramping up business services, changes to VR social media, working with sister agencies within DHS. Possible changes to client financial participation, sliding fee scale, VR Higher Ed. contribution. Damian and Cheryl will be touring the state to talk with CRP's

**Tribal Updates** – No one present to give updates

**Schedule 2022 meetings Action:** A motion to approve the 2022 meeting dates was made by Trevor Vannett and seconded by Jacey Enget. Motion carried. Dates are as follows:

January 19, April 20, July 20, October 12

**Membership/Public Relations Committee** -Renee Speidel-Wetzsteon, Chair

Reach out to tribes to get regular reports at the full council meetings. ND Assoc of Blind and P&A worked with the legislature on HB 1253- which now allows for remote and accessible voting. Are meeting our % of persons with disabilities on the council. Reviewed duties of our committee.

**Planning/Evaluation Committee** – Terry Peterson, Chair

Reviewed VR policies 1803 and 1901 and client Satisfaction Surveys- overall satisfaction was positive Will work with VR on State plan- due in spring 22, and Strategic Plan.

**Resource Committee** – Jason Sutheimer, Chair

Reviewed the Employee Gallop Poll Survey results. Recruitment issues – close of UI programs-did not have the impact expected-expected more people going back to work. A variance in wages and number of open jobs make it difficult to keep employees.

**Employment Committee** – Bruce Murry, Chair

Informal supports & self-arranged employment - Importance of informal supports

DPI: Robin Lang, DPI, re DOEd perspective on employment NDWD

DPI pubs: <https://insights.nd.gov/Education/State/SPED/PostSecondaryOutcomes>

CMS perspective: payor of last resort, as are many others- EPSDT within CMS

Map to navigate services so individuals meet their life goals

2015 VR Needs Assessment:<https://www.nd.gov/dhs/dvr/docs/state-needs-assessment.pdf>

Authorizing-VR Counselors with Level II or higher training to make decisions up to the full \$10k they are allowed. Upper limit for Regional Admin of \$50k (\$49,999), 50k and above goes to state office.

Matthew McCleary shared parts of his thesis. Contact Matt for more detail. Tina Bay updated re: DD Division could pay for supports in the case of a student with IDD graduating before 21, depending upon if they accessed all available educational services. Beth Larson-Steckler mentioned community colleges are working on programs for youth with disabilities who seek higher education, including BSC, Minot State and others. Discussion on # of people with disabilities, hours worked, dollars earned. VR now has authority to spend the funds collected from parking fee fines.

**Action:** A motion to approve VR Policies 1803 (Client Purchases) was made by Trevor Vannett and seconded by Jacey Enget. Motion carried.

**Action:** A motion to approve VR Policies 1901 (Prior Written Approval Requests) was made by Trevor Vannett and seconded by Bruce Murry Motion carried.

**Public Comment** - No one present for public for comment.

**Next meeting – October 20, 2021**

10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. CST via TEAMS and in person

**Action:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trevor Vannett and seconded by Jason Sutheimer. Motion carried.

**Meeting adjourned at a 2:40 p.m.**